



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 26.5

Subject:	Visitation and Visitor Control for Youth in DCS Group Homes
Authority:	TCA 37-5-105; 37-5-106
Standards:	COA: GLS: 2.01, 2.02, 2.03
Application:	To All Department of Children's Services DCS Group Home Employees

Policy Statement:

All youth placed in Department of Children's Services DCS Group Homes shall be afforded the opportunity to receive visits from family members and friends. All visitors shall be sufficiently controlled to ensure the safety, security and integrity of the facility. Visitors shall be required to abide by the rules and regulations governing visitation and in all cases shall be treated with courtesy and respect. Volunteers visiting youth shall be required to comply with the Department of Children's Services policies regarding volunteers.

Purpose:

To ensure that family connections are maintained by providing for relatives and friends to visit youth at the DCS Group Homes.

Procedures:

A. Approved visitor list	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. During orientation, every youth will be required to provide staff with a list of visitors (Type I and Type II) he/she wishes to receive.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) The residential case worker will discuss the list with the youth's Family Service Worker no later than the initial Individual Program Plan (IPP) staffing.b) Each visitor requested by the youth to be placed on the visiting list shall be approved for visitation by the DCS group home supervisor/designee unless it is determined that visitation by a particular person is considered detrimental to the youth.2. When a visitor is considered detrimental to the youth and the treatment team's recommendation is against visitation, specific reasons shall be given in writing to the youth by the treatment team leader with a copy placed in the youth's case file.3. Reasons for disapproval may include, but are not limited to the following:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Negative/law violating influence on youth;b) Prior instances of contraband transfer; andc) Violations of program rules.
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The youth's treatment team shall review the list and establish an approved visitor list that shall be forwarded to the staff member responsible for visitor registration. 5. The team leader shall ensure that the original recommendation list and a copy of the approved list are placed in the youth's case file on form CS-0111, Approved Contact List. 6. When an individual is not placed on the approved visitor list, a written notice of the exclusion, with reasons, shall be given to the youth who submitted the individual's name. A youth may grieve the exclusion from the approved list. 7. The youth's treatment team shall amend the approved visitor list as needed. 8. Visitation by Type II approved visitors is not a right but a privilege and may be denied for disciplinary reasons. 9. Visitation of Type I approved visitors shall not be denied to youth regardless of their progress or lack of progress in the program.
<p>B. Visitation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visitation practices in DCS group homes must consist of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provision for visitation for at least three hours on Sunday afternoons between the hours of 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m.; b) Provisions for visitation beyond designated days and/or hours where hardship or unusual conditions exist, e.g., irregular academic or vocational training schedules; c) Reasonable limitations on the number of visitors a youth may receive at a given time considering limits on space at the facility; d) Provision that Type II visitors under the age of 18 will be required to present a letter from their parents/guardians granting permission to visit OR be accompanied by their parents/guardians; e) Provision for privacy when visitation is by an attorney or a member of the clergy; f) Written guidelines which establish an acceptable manner of dress for visitors; g) Provision which establishes a method of notifying the youth's parents/guardians of the visitation hours and regulations; h) Provision for advance notice (at least 24 hours) of intent to visit by all visitors. 2. Upon entry into the program, the youth and his/her parents/guardian(s) shall be notified in writing by the supervisor or designee of the visitation hours and rules. In compliance with Title IV-E requirements, parents must be allowed a minimum of four (4) hours visitation per month with youth. 3. The DCS group home supervisor shall designate indoor and outdoor areas to be used for visitation. In designating such areas, consideration shall be given to personnel resources, recreation, space, security, safety, privacy and the

	<p>weather.</p> <p>4. The DCS group home supervisor may alter the regular visitation day and time in order to accommodate special program activities, but in such cases at least one week's notice of such change shall be given to parents/guardians.</p>
C. Visitor control	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Visitors shall be informed in writing regarding personal property, including food, which they may bring to youths and the manner in which such property shall be distributed to youths.2. All visitors must register on the Visitors Log before being allowed to visit. This includes each member of a family or group.3. All visitors entering the facility will be subject to search. They shall be made aware of this prior to or at the time of the visit. The search may be of their person, belongings or vehicle.4. The intended visit may be denied by the person in charge at the time of the visit for any of the following reasons:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Visitor refuses to show appropriate and bona fide identification;b) Visitor refuses to submit to a search;c) Visitor is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; andd) Visitor refuses to comply with the facility dress regulations5. A visit may be terminated for the reasons set out below by designated staff in charge of visitation. However, before a visit is terminated for misconduct, less restrictive measures shall be used, such as warning the youth and/or visitor(s).<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Any violation of the visitation rules and regulations;b) Failure of a visitor to control his/her children;c) Unacceptable physical contact between youth and visitor6. Visiting privileges may be suspended by the DCS group home supervisor or designee if:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) During a visit it becomes apparent that the visitor and/or youth are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs;b) Visitor repeatedly violates visitation rules and regulations;c) Visitor continually fails to control his/her children; andd) Visitor continually refuses to refrain from unacceptable physical contact with the youth.7. <u>Denied or terminated visit:</u><ol style="list-style-type: none">a) A detailed report in memorandum form shall be prepared by the DCS group home facility staff taking action.b) The memorandum shall be submitted to the DCS group home supervisor

	<p>and a copy placed in the youth's case file.</p> <p>8. <u>Suspended visiting privileges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The name of the person whose visiting privileges have been suspended shall be removed from the youth's approved visitor list. b) The DCS group home supervisor shall notify the person by registered mail, detailing the reasons for the suspension and forward a copy to the Family Service Worker. c) The visitor may apply to the Director of Community Residential Facilities in central office six weeks (6) after the date of suspension to have the suspension lifted. d) A copy of the letter requesting the suspension be lifted will be sent to the appropriate DCS group home supervisor, the youth involved and a copy placed in the youth's case file. e) The youth may grieve the removal of a person's name from the approved visitor list through the normal grievance procedures as outlined in DCS policy <u>24.11 Grievance Procedures for Youth in DCS Group Homes</u>.
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Forms:	<u>CS-0111, Approved Contact List</u>
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Collateral documents:	<i>Visitors Log</i>
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Glossary:	
Term	Definition
Type I Visitor:	Immediate family members, including parents, siblings, grandparents, half-siblings, step-siblings, step-parents, spouse, children, or other family members who have had custody of the youth and other significant family or extended family members.
Type II Visitor:	Other persons not defined as Type I Visitors who do not function in a professional capacity or who are not approved volunteers who desire to visit a youth while he/she is placed in a group home.